

Message Text

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ACTION IO-14

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 IOE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 ACDA-07
DHA-05 TRSE-00 OMB-01 ARA-10 MCT-01 OPR-02 /098 W
-----106299 231332Z /40

O 231155Z SEP 77

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8930
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 PRETORIA 4999

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PDEV SF WA
SUBJ: NAMIBIA TALKS: SAG MAKES COUNTERPROPOSAL

REF: PRETORIA 4978

1. SUMMARY: THIS MORNING (SEPT 23) FONMIN BOTHA PRESENTED THE CONTACT GROUP WITH THE SAG'S COUNTERPROPOSAL FOR A PHASED WITHDRAWAL OF SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS FROM NAMIBIA. THE UNDERLYING PRINCIPLE OF THEIR PLAN IS THAT THEIR WILLINGNESS TO WITHDRAW, AND THE MANNER AND EXTENT TO WHICH WITHDRAWAL IS CARRIED OUT, WILL BE PREDICATED ON A REDUCTION OF "THE THREATS NECESSITATING" THE PRESENCE OF SA TROOPS IN NORTHERN NAMIBIA. AS PRESENTED, THE PLAN LACKS SPECIFICS.

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ACCORDINGLY, WE ASKED THE SAG TO SUPPLY US WITH ENOUGH ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SO THAT WE COULD FORM A JUDGEMENT AS TO WHETHER THE PLAN PROVIDES A BASIS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS. BOTHA HAS UNDERTAKEN TO DO THIS AND HAS SCHEDULED A MEETING WITH US AT 6:00 P.M. END SUMMARY.

2. CONTACT GROUP MET WITH BOTHA AND FOURIE (VORSTER WAS

NOT PRESENT) THIS MORNING AT 9:15. BOTHA SAID WE COULD EITHER ASK FOR SOUTH AFRICA'S REACTION TO WHAT WE HAD PRESENTED TO THEM YESTERDAY (AND HE CLEARLY IMPLIED THAT IF WE DID SO THE TALKS WOULD BREAK DOWN), OR WE COULD HEAR OUT THE SOUTH AFRICAN POSITION, WHICH HE HAD INTENDED TO GIVE US AT YESTERDAY'S MEETING. SPEAKING FOR THE FIVE, AMBASSADOR MCHENRY SAID WE WOULD BE GLAD TO HEAR THE SOUTH AFRICAN PROPOSALS AND, INDEED, HAD PREVIOUSLY HAD ASKED FOR THEM.

3. BOTHA THEN READ THE SAG'S POSITION ON WITHDRAWAL OF ITS MILITARY FORCES FROM NAMIBIA (FULL TEXT PARAGRAPH 8 BELOW). IN BRIEF, IT STATES THE SAG'S COMMITMENT TO INDEPENDENCE FOR NAMIBIA, FREE ELECTIONS, ETC.; EXPRESSES A WILLINGNESS TO REDUCE ITS MILITARY FORCES AS THE THREAT OF ARMED ACTION BY SWAPO AND CUBAN FORCES IS REMOVED; OUTLINES THE REQUIREMENTS SWAPO WOULD HAVE TO MEET (E.G., "CEASE ARMED ACTIVITY AGAINST SOUTH WEST AFRICA"); STATES THAT "WATERTIGHT GUARANTEES" MUST BE PROVIDED THAT THE MILITARY THREAT TO NAMIBIA FROM THE NORTH WILL BE ENDED; AND AGREES TO THE PRINCIPLE OF UN OBSERVATION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES THAT WOULD REMAIN IN NAMIBIA DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD.

4. IN THE ENSUING DISCUSSION BOTHA SAID THAT BECAUSE OF THE "CHAOTIC" SITUATION IN SOUTHERN ANGOLA, THE SAG FELT ENTITLED "TO ASK YOU TO SHOW MORE CONSIDERATION FOR THE DELICATE SPOT SOUTH AFRICAN FINDS ITSELF IN REGARDING THE SECURITY SITUATION." CONFIDENTIAL

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5. WE NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH THEIR CONCEPT OF FORCE REDUCTION WAS SIMILAR TO OURS, THERE WERE OBVIOUS DIFFERENCES WITH RESPECT TO DETAILS. BUT OUR BASIC PROBLEM WITH THEIR PRESENTATION WAS THAT IT DID NOT PROVIDE US WITH THE SPECIFICS OF TIMING, SCALE AND INTERRELATIONSHIPS WHICH WE MUST HAVE IN ORDER TO FORM A JUDGEMENT. SUBSEQUENTLY, BOTHA AND FOURIE SAID THEY WOULD MEET WITH THEIR COLLEAGUES FROM THE SA DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE TO DRAW UP DETAILS OF A PLAN ON HOW THEY WOULD GO ABOUT TROOP REDUCTIONS. THEY INDICATED THEY WOULD WISH TO CHECK THE PLAN WITH MINISTER OF DEFENSE P.W. BOTHA AND TOLD US THAT BECAUSE OF THE CARE THEY MUST GIVE TO WORKING ON THE DETAILS, THEY WOULD MEET WITH US AT 6:00 P.M. INSTEAD OF AT NOON AS PREVIOUSLY SCHEDULED.

6. BEFORE WE ADJOURNED, WE POINTED OUT TO THEM TWO OBVIOUS PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH THEIR PROPOSAL: THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF A SIZEABLE BODY OF SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS IN NAMIBIA WILL BE A SERIOUS STICKING POINT WITH OTHER PARTIES; AND IT IS EXTREMELY DIFFICULT TO ENVISION HOW THE "WATER-TIGHT GUARANTEES" WHICH THEY REQUIRE CAN BE PROVIDED.

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH WE HAVE YET TO SEE THE DETAILS OF THEIR PLAN, WE BELIEVE THE SOUTH AFRICANS VERY MUCH WANT TO KEEP THE TALKS ALIVE AND WILL BE PREPARED TO DO SOME HORSE TRADING ON WITHDRAWAL ARRANGEMENTS. OUR TASK WILL BE TO WORK OUT A REASONABLE PROPOSAL, WITH PROVISION FOR AN ADEQUATE UN PRESENCE, WHICH STANDS A CHANCE OF BEING SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE FRONTLINE, NIGERIA AND SWAPO.

8. 8. FULL TEXT OF SAG PROPOSAL FOLLOWS:

QUOTE AS PREVIOUSLY INDICATED, THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT HAS COMMITTED ITSELF TO -

(A) GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO SOUTH WEST AFRICA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, IN ANY CASE BEFORE THE END OF 1978;

(B) INDEPENDENCE TO BE GRANTED TO THE TERRITORY AS A WHOLE;
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(C) ELECTIONS ON THE BASIS OF ONE-MAN-ONE-VOTE COUNTRY-WIDE FOR A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY;

(D) REMOVAL OF DISCRIMINATION ON BASIS OF COLOUR;

(E) THE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL SATISFYING HIMSELF ON THE FAIRNESS OF THE ELECTIONS;

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(F) THE RELEASE OF DETAINEES AND POLITICAL PRISONERS, IF ANY, INSIDE AND OUTSIDE THE TERRITORY;
(G) THE RETURN OF ALL SOUTH WEST AFRICANS TO PARTICIPATE PEACEFULLY IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS;
(G) THE APPOINTMENT BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF A PANEL OF JURISTS TO DECIDE UPON DISPUTES, FOR EXAMPLE ON FAIRNESS OF ELECTIONEERING, STATUS OF CONVICTED PRISONERS, ETC.
QUOTE SOUTH AFRICA ITSELF WANTS NOTHING FROM SOUTH WEST AFRICA. IT IS ONLY INTERESTED IN SEEING STABILITY AND PROGRESS IN THAT COUNTRY. FURTHERMORE, SOUTH AFRICA IS ANXIOUS TO BRING BACK ITS FORCES AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THE ONLY PURPOSE OF THEIR PRESENCE IN THE TERRITORY FOR THE TIME BEING IS TO INSURE SOUTH WEST AFRICA AGAINST AGGRESSION FROM OUTSIDE AND TO PROVIDE SECURITY AND PROTECTION TO THE
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PEOPLE OF THE TERRITORY - THUS ALSO ENSURING SAFE AND ORDERLY ELECTIONS AND TRANSITION TOWARDS INDEPENDENCE.
QUOTE IT THEREFORE STANDS TO REASON THAT THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT IS WILLING AND PREPARED TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF SOUTH AFRICAN DEFENCE PERSONNEL AS SOON AS THE THREATS NECESSITATING THEIR PRESENCE ARE REDUCED. FURTHERMORE, REDUCTION WOULD BE EFFECTED PROGRESSIVELY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DEGREE OF DE-ESCALATION OR THE DIMINISHING OF THESE THREATS AND VIOLENCE. HOWEVER, IN ITS EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT FACES, INTER ALIA, THE FOLLOWING PROBLEMS -

(1) THE PRESENCE OF SUBSTANTIAL CUBAN FORCES ON THE ANGOLAN SIDE. WITH THE PRESENT SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES IN SOUTH WEST AFRICA, WE ARE SATISFIED THAT NO CUBAN MOVE AGAINST THE TERRITORY WOULD TAKE PLACE. HOWEVER, AS LONG AS THE CUBANS ARE THERE, IT WOULD BE IRRESPONSIBLE NOT TO PROVIDE FOR POSSIBLE INCURSIONS.

(2) A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF ARMED SWAPO PERSONNEL ARE BASED IN ANGOLA - SOME CAMPS ONLY A FEW KILOMETERS FROM THE SOUTH WEST AFRICA BORDER. UNLESS THE FORCES ARE AT HAND TO DEAL WITH INFILTRATIONS, THESE CAN TAKE PLACE ON A SUBSTANTIAL SCALE. BECAUSE OF THE GEOGRAPHICAL PROXIMITY, SWAPO CAN INFILTRATE OVERNIGHT, ATTACK CIVILIANS, ABDUCT SCHOOL CHILDREN AND OTHERS, AND RETURN TO ANGOLA OVERNIGHT.

(3) IF THE SOUTH AFRICAN FORCES ARE REDUCED PREMATURELY, THE FIELD WOULD BE WIDE OPEN TO SWAPO TO FORCIBLY RECRUIT TRAINEES FOR TERRORIST ACTIVITIES.

(4) MINE-LAYING BY SWAPO CONTINUALLY PRESENTS A HAZARD,
AND IN THE EVENT OF REDUCTION OF FORCES, ALTERNATIVE METHODS
WOULD HAVE TO BE FOUND TO ELIMINATE THIS DANGER.
QUOTE TO ENABLE THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO PUT
IN OPERATION THE PLANNED REDUCTION OF ITS FORCES,
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IT WOULD THEREFORE BE NECESSARY FOR SWAPO -
(A) TO CEASE ARMED ACTIVITY AGAINST SOUTH WEST AFRICA;
(B) TO CEASE INTIMIDATION OF THE CIVILIAN POPULATION;
(C) TO STOP MINE-LAYING, AND FOR METHODS TO BE FOUND FOR
LIFTING EXISTING MINES;
(D) TO CEASE ABDUCTION OF CHILDREN, AND OTHER SECTIONS
OF THE POPULATION;
(E) TO CEASE ATTEMPTS TO SABOTAGE THE CONSTRUCTION WORKS AT
CALUEQUE-RUACANA PUMPING INSTALLATION, POWER LINES, ETC.;
(F) TO CEASE ATTEMPTS TO RECRUIT AND TRAIN FURTHER TERRORISTS.
QUOTE FURTHERMORE, IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO ENSURE THE
REMOVAL OF SWAPO CAMPS TO A REASONABLE DISTANCE FROM THE
SOUTH WEST AFRICAN BORDER, TO A LINE NORTH OF MOCAMEDES-
SERPA PINTO.
QUOTE WATERTIGHT GUARANTEES WILL HAVE TO BE FOUND TO ENSURE
THAT THIS IS DONE, AND SOME FORM OF INSPECTION AND CONTROL
WOULD BE NECESSARY. GUARANTEES IN REGARD TO THE CUBAN
TROOPS WOULD ALSO BE REQUIRED.
QUOTE IF THESE PROBLEMS COULD BE RESOLVED, SOUTH AFRICA
WOULD ARRANGE FOR AN IMMEDIATE REDUCTION IN THE NUMBER
OF TROOPS AND FOR A GRADUAL WITHDRAWAL TO THEIR BASES. IT
WILL BE APPRECIATED THAT EXISTING BASES AND AIRPORTS IN
OWAMBO AND ELSEWHERE CANNOT BE ABANDONED, BUT METHODS COULD
BE DEVISED - E.G. THE ATTACHMENT OF MUTUALLY AGREED U.N.
OBSERVERS (OFFICERS) - THAT SHOULD SATISFY THE OUTSIDE
WORLD THAT THESE WOULD NOT CARRY OUT ANY OPERATIONS FROM
THEIR BASES, UNLESS THERE IS A BREAKDOWN IN THE ARRANGE-
MENTS ALREADY SET OUT.
QUOTE THE ACTUAL GUARANTEES AND OTHER WAYS AND MEANS OF
IMPLEMENTING THESE PROPOSALS WOULD REQUIRE DETAILED FURTHER
DISCUSSIONS. THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE WOULD BE PREPARED
EITHER TO TAKE PART IN SUCH DELIBERATIONS OR TO MAKE AVAILABLE
FOR THIS PURPOSE MEMBERS OF HIS PERSONNEL. UNQUOTE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL SETTLEMENT, TROOP REDUCTIONS
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
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Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977PRETOR04999
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770346-1222
Format: TEL
From: PRETORIA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
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Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
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Review Event:
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Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1152703
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NAMIBIA TALKS: SAG MAKES COUNTERPROPOSAL
TAGS: PDEV, SF, WA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a6efcc3e-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009